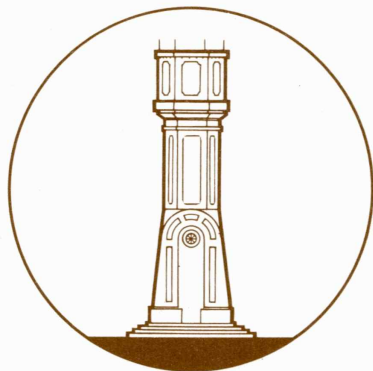
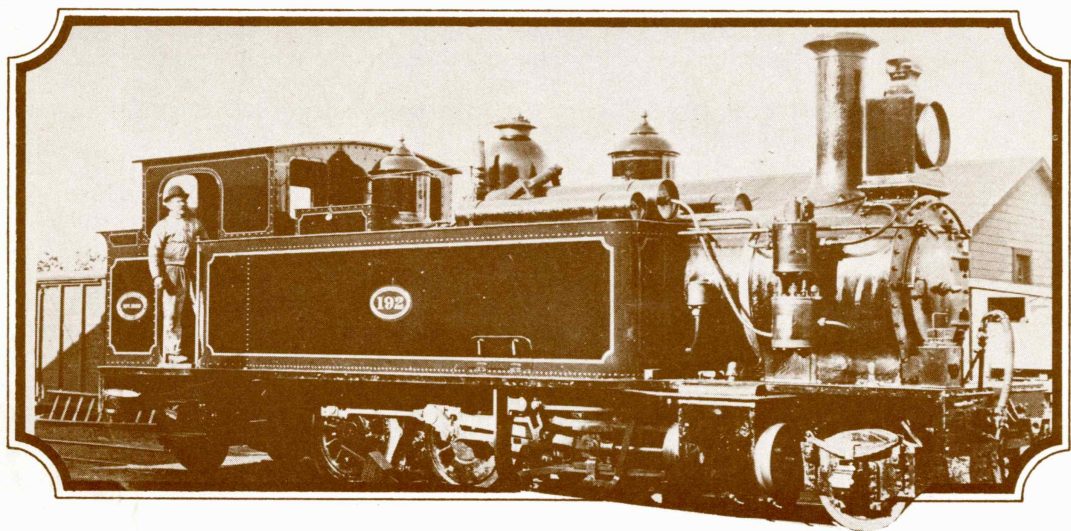


HISTORY OF

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NZ Rail



ADDINGTON RAILWAY WORKSHOPS



Brief History Of ADDINGTON RAILWAYS WORKSHOPS

New Zealand's first railway workshops were established in Christchurch during the 1860's.

These were operated by the Canterbury Provincial Government following the opening of New Zealand's first railway in 1863.

The Provincial Government was abolished in 1876 and control of Canterbury railways passed to the central government's Public Works Department. A rapid expansion of railways followed and in 1878 approval was given by the House of Representatives to build new railway workshops at Addington.

Work started on the new building in late 1878 and a newspaper item in June 1879 reported that new carriage, wagon and engine shops were under construction.

The new workshops were to be used for railway construction and repair work from Christchurch and Canterbury areas and the official site of the workshops was moved from the Christchurch station area to Addington in May 1880.

In those early days construction covered little of the present site. A blacksmith shop and boiler shop were established in one building and adjacent to it were the brass foundry, machine shop, and locomotive erecting shop with its engine and boiler house. There was also wagon and woodworking shops, another engine and boiler house and a tarpaulin shop.

In 1883 some early shops were extended and the water tower, which is still a landmark, was built.

The year 1889 saw the start of Addington's locomotive building programme. Two W class locomotives were built. One of these, W 192, is still owned by New Zealand Railways and will be on display during centenary celebrations of the workshop.

Leading up to the start of the 20th century more locomotives and many passenger and freight cars were built and in 1901 an iron and steel foundry was established at the workshop.

During the early part of this century Addington turned out many of the great steam locomotives of the period. These included such classics as the A

class in 1906, the X class, for heavy goods trains, in 1908 and the famous Ab class in 1915. The Ab, the workhorse of N.Z.R. for many years, became the largest single class produced in New Zealand and 38 came out of Addington alone.

A Commission of Inquiry in 1925 changed the face of the workshops when it recommended a major reorganisation of the various workshops. After the reorganisation Addington took over the responsibility for car and wagon work and the last steam locomotive to come out of the workshops was Ab 785 in 1926.

Reconstruction work began in early 1927. A new car and wagon shop was built to supplement the early building which was also extended. Additions were made to the boiler shop to form what is now known as the Structural A shed. The old locomotive shops were converted to incorporate the machine and steel wagon shops. An old shop used for car painting and the manufacture of track components was enlarged to form the wood wagon shop. New woodmill and reclaim buildings were built and separate contracts were let for the tarpaulin shop and social hall.

Much new railway rolling stock was produced from Addington over the next few years and the workshops also produced many items for other Government departments.

During the second world war, Addington, was used for munitions work. Even some Semple tanks were produced from the workshops as well as a more conventional batch of ambulance railway cars which were converted to normal passenger cars after the war ended.

After the war Addington settled down to regular railway work. In the immediate post-war years a number of old wooden cars, some built at Addington at the turn of the century, were rebuilt as car vans. Other work comprised mainly repairs and assembly of imported wagons.

For a few years there was a return to locomotive construction and in the 1960's 26 Dsc class diesel-electric shunting locomotives were built.

Recent years have seen a resurgence of wagon construction. Container wagons have made up the bulk of the programme, but there have been various other types, including Nh class high-speed four wheelers.

Today Addington covers 41 acres and employs over 900 staff. The workshops has served an important role in the redevelopment of New Zealand Railways over the past 100 years and this looks set to continue as it enters its second century.



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